

How should I comment?

- Please respond either in writing or email to the case officer.
- You can outline your concerns about a proposed development. If you are not a member of the Development Control Committee nor likely to be a substitute member of the committee, you can indicate whether or not you are in favour of an application, but our local Code advises members against actively working for a pressure group either acting in support of or against a particular development.
- If you are a member of the Committee or could be a substitute member when an application is being considered you will need to be more cautious in your response. The County Council's Local Code advises that committee members should not form a view on an application until it is debated at the committee meeting. In these circumstances advice is that you can:
 - (a) make factual comments such as 'I have received x number of letters in support of/opposing the development', the numbers on roll at a school exceed capacity by y number;
 - (b) refer to planning policy e.g. the site is in the Green Belt where there is a presumption against such development;
 - (c) outline known local concerns e.g. parking problems, lorry noise etc, but do NOT say whether or not you support the application or that permission should be refused.
- Members who are not on the committee can also speak at the Development Control Committee about an application being considered. If it is your division you can, having first notified the chairman, speak in your capacity as local member for up to four minutes. Democratic Services will let you know if an application in your division is on the agenda and send you a copy of the officer's report. If you are not the local member you will be entitled to speak in your personal capacity as a member of the public subject

to the rules in our public speaking scheme, this means that for a Tuesday meeting you will need to register your interest by 10am on the preceding Friday.

Who do I speak to about a planning matter?

Please contact the following:

- Planning applications - the stated case officer on the number given.
- General enquiries about Minerals and Waste development
David Periam (01296 382111)
- General enquiries about County Council developments including school buildings
Rachel Jones (01296 382819)
- Enforcement Inquiries/Reports of Unauthorised development
Darl Sweetland (01296 383186)
- General Enquiries about the County Council's planning Development Control Service provision
David Pickard (01296 382829)

Please refer any enquiries about district planning issues to the relevant district council.

If your enquiry is about a highways development control issue please refer to the relevant officer as follows:

- Strategic Development including County Matter and County Council applications
Gerry Harvey at County Hall (01296 382660).
- Aylesbury Vale District applications
Simon Willison via Winslow Office (01296 382430).
- Chiltern, Wycombe and South Bucks District applications
Chris Saunders at the Beaconsfield Office (01494 586645).

Buckinghamshire County Council

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MEMBERS USER GUIDE

March 2004



Planning and Environment

Introduction

From Mrs E M Lay, Chairman of the Development Control Committee.

"The County Council is the planning authority for certain categories of development including mineral working, waste management and those for its own service needs e.g. school buildings and roads.

Whether or not as a member of the committee we all may have a part to play in ensuring the County Council delivers an effective and efficient planning service.

When a planning application is received which relates to development in your division, the planning officer will ask you for your views on it, so that these can be taken into account when the decision is made. This is your opportunity to be involved in the planning process. The government has set us targets for dealing with applications in a prompt and efficient manner. To help us to achieve this, I ask that when responding to consultations on planning applications you, follow the advice set out in this guide. Also you can come to the Development Control Committee and speak about an application in your division.

To conclude, I urge all members to respond when consulted on a planning application and to do so promptly."

How do I find out about a planning application?

- We will consult you directly on all planning applications we receive which relate to development within your electoral division.
- We also send lists of planning applications to be determined by the County Council to all members. These give the name and number of the case officer to whom any queries should be addressed.
- For details of district matters please refer to the weekly lists produced by the relevant district council.

When should I respond?

- The date by which a response is required is given in the consultation letter. This is usually three weeks from the date of the letter or six weeks in the case of major schemes subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Note

It is important that you respond quickly so that any concerns which you or your constituents have may be investigated. Do not wait until the committee meeting before commenting on an application as:

- (a) No comment by the relevant date will be treated as 'no objection' and the application may then be determined by officers under delegated powers and hence not be reported to the committee for determination.
- (b) It can be difficult for planning officers to comment on issues which require further investigation if they are only aware of them at the meeting itself. The County Council is committed to processing applications as quickly as possible and will only defer applications in exceptional cases. Therefore there is the risk that issues raised late in the process will not be fully considered.

What can I comment on?

Please limit your comments to material planning considerations such as:-

- National policies e.g. Waste Strategy 2000, Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) etc.
- Policies in the Development Plan (County Structure Plan, Minerals and Waste Local Plans, District Local Plans or successor documents) e.g. compatibility of the development with Green belt, Chilterns AONB, Green Space policy etc.
- Appearance and character of the development.
- Traffic generation, highway safety and parking.
- Overshadowing, overlooking and loss of privacy.
- Noise nuisance, dust, odour, visual intrusion or other loss of amenity.
- Site layout.
- Restoration and landscape proposals.
- Presence or absence of any other overriding factors such as need which cannot be provided elsewhere.

Avoid comments which are not planning matters, such as:

- Boundary disputes, private property matters.
- Personal remarks (e.g. the applicant's motives, financial situation etc).
- Service issues e.g. education policy.

Also you can say whether you consider that there are grounds for the application being considered by the Development Control Committee rather than by officers under delegated powers. However you must give your reasons why an officer delegated decision would be inappropriate. If you feel that a site visit by a member of the committee would be beneficial please say so again giving the reasons.

Is there any other guidance?

Yes, members are referred to the County Council's Local Code of Conduct for elected members and officers involved in the consideration of planning matters.